

# The Mind's Eye

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NORTH ADAMS STATE COLLEGE

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The Mind's Eye welcomes contributions. Your research, comment,  
reflections, reviews, letters, poetry, fiction are invited.



## Letters

### FREE SPEECH FOR NAZIS

Sir: Seldom has the conflict between two sets of rights been more sharply, or perhaps more agonizingly, presented than that between the right of the Jewish community in Skokie, Illinois, to be free from a verbal and symbolic assault on its culture and race and that of the right of a hated minority to exercise free speech and its corollary, public demonstration, as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

To make the issue more concrete in terms of the two articles by Drs. Schiff and Gengareilly (The Mind's Eye, April) let us put the question in two ways: (1) Is it necessary to protect the Nazis in their march in Skokie in order to assure that Dr. Gengareilly was protected against the white community in Mississippi back in 1965, or that he would be protected in similar circumstances in the future? (2) Are the affront to Jewish sensibilities, the attack on their personalities, and the potential for encouraging a wave of anti-Semitism so great as to outweigh one of the most vital foundations of a free society, freedom of speech?

Dr. Gengareilly answered the first question in the affirmative; Dr. Schiff answered the second in like manner.

In trying to reach a resolution of the conflict for myself I was led to a consideration of Justice Holmes's famous formula for resolving such conflicts in *Schenck v. United States*, the first great case involving freedom of speech. Therein Holmes states, "The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. It is a question of proximity and degree."

Is there a "clear and present danger" that the march of the Nazis in Skokie will touch off a wave of anti-Semitism now or even in the foreseeable future?

Dr. Schiff believes there is, and she cites as proof that "Hitler came to power legally, exploiting the letter of the law to subvert the law." Nobody, of course, can be certain about the future, but in the light of America's ideals and values, which have been two hundred years in the making, any repetition here of the events in Germany under Hitler seems incredibly remote. The historical context is just too utterly different.

We do not have a tradition of anti-Semitism that goes back to the Middle Ages. We have not, in the recent past, suffered a humiliating defeat in war for which Jews were made the scapegoat. We do not have a soul-searing depression; and when we did, it did not result in any wave of anti-Semitism. Our traditions are so deeply rooted relative to representative government that the possibility of a Nazi-like dictator gaining power would set at naught every psychological law concerning conditioning that I have ever read.

Belief in fair play, equal opportunity, and the value and worth of each individual, while not observed perfectly, are still so much a part of the ordinary thought processes of the average American that it would take decades, if not longer, to reverse them. The universal condemnation of the Nazis and their Skokie plan by every editor and columnist in the United States is proof of what I mean. In Justice Holmes's words, the "clear and present danger" which would warrant interdicting free speech is simply not present.

John T. McNulty  
Associate Professor of History

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### The Editor's File

#### THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

The principal victim of Frank Collin's Nazi party has been its legal defender, the American Civil Liberties Union. In its March newsletter the ACLU disclosed that it has received 4,000 letters of resignation and suffered additional thousands of silent nonrenewals, bringing the total loss of members to about 20%,



a staggering blow for the organization. That the ACLU was willing to take such a risk is evidence of the firmness of its commitment to civil rights.

The ACLU is making vigorous efforts to recoup its financial losses. An appeal for special contributions has been mailed to members. In newspapers around the country, letters from ACLU officials have been published, explaining the ACLU's side of the controversy. The Brattleboro Reformer carried a defense of the First Amendment position by the executive director of ACLU-Vermont; the letter ended with words from Thomas Paine: "He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression, for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself."

An authoritative and perceptive history of the case by the individual most concerned, David M. Hamlin, Executive Director of ACLU-Illinois, is found in the Civil Liberties Review for March/April. After almost a year of court battles, the Illinois Supreme Court has ruled against Skokie and in favor of the Nazis. Frank Collin's march is now scheduled for late June.

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#### THE NEED FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

by James R. Roach

In examining the roots of American history it becomes evident quite quickly that the ideal of liberal education was a powerful concern of some of the most influential of the American revolutionary figures. John Adams revealed his Puritan conviction that nothing could preserve future generations from tyranny more surely than "knowledge diffused generally through the whole body of the people." It was this great concern that led very early to the establishment of grammar schools and colleges. In his "Thoughts on Government" written in 1776, Adams included the provision, "Laws for the liberal education of youth . . . are so

extremely wise and useful that . . . no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant." Such sentiments were shared by other notables of the time, Madison and Jefferson foremost among them. For these men education was the key to democracy, and Jefferson, the very personification of liberal learning, sought to establish its place in the budding postrevolutionary democracy through his "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," in which he stated his belief in the central importance of liberal education in a free society.

The relationship between education and democracy has not always been one of sweetness and light, and the voices of critics have often been raised when this relationship seemed to threaten the integrity of the educational process or pervert the true ends of education.

The latest critic raising a concern about education and democracy is John R. Silber, President of Boston University and an untiring advocate of excellence in education. In an article published in Harper's last June, Silber laments the lowering of standards in education which, he believes, traduces education, defrauds students, and disregards the needs of society. Setting forth his conviction that "the only standard of performance that can sustain a free society is excellence," he attacks the notion that excellence is or can be at odds with a democratic society, but protests that spurious democratic influences are at work in education. He catalogues the signs in education that point to a flight from excellence: grade inflation, which assumes that all students are equally hard-working or equally qualified; the war against grading itself, as if there were no need to discriminate between excellent work and that which is merely adequate. He sees these practices and others such as plagiarism, the selling of term papers, and the acceptance of inauthentic or shoddy work as further signs of education's sellout to mediocrity. At the heart of it all, says Silber, is an adulterated understanding of democracy.



It is appropriate, I think, that John Silber took his message first to the Municipal Authorities of Boston gathered in Faneuil Hall on the Fourth of July, 1976. What better setting for a critique of democracy and education! In this seat of learning as well as liberty, Silber called for the recognition of elitism in education, a need to foster the best and the brightest. Recognizing that America exists as a democracy by the consent of the governed, he nonetheless claims that political democracy is ill-served if people believe that every institution in a democracy ought to be organized democratically. To the contrary, he maintains that most institutions should function on an elitist basis; that is, that "decisions within them ought to be made by those most qualified to make them." Elitism, according to Silber, calls upon the best or most skilled members of a group and is essential to the quality of institutional life. It, too, can have its counterfeit forms, however, and this happens when an elite is created whose qualifications are "nonexistent or irrelevant."

Silber states that everyone knows the difference between a gifted surgeon and a "butcher," and all agree that the practice of surgery should be restricted to those who possess the necessary knowledge and skill. No patient is likely to give consent to be operated upon by a doctor who decides to poll those in the operating room to determine the best method of proceeding.

Here one can recognize in Silber the former professor of philosophy and can easily imagine the ghost of Aristotle standing by his elbow, reading to him from his *Politics*: "Democracy . . . arises out of the notion that those who are equal in any respect are equal in all respects; because men are equally free, they claim to be absolutely equal." And one can understand why Silber believes that the flight from excellence is profoundly philosophical, arising out of an erroneous understanding of the relationship of academic excellence to equality of opportunity.

In appealing to Jefferson and Adams, one has to recognize that they believed in a natural aristocracy that would be identified and elicited through education. It was an aristocracy based on virtue, intelligence, and natural talents, not on wealth and place in society. Education, rightly established and maintained, would allow the talents and gifts of every citizen to emerge. This demands academic discrimination and recognition of achievement. There should be equality of educational opportunity so that the best may emerge and lead. To refuse to distinguish the excellent from the average is to counterfeit democracy and to undermine it. Silber says it pointedly: "As long as intelligence is better than stupidity and knowledge than ignorance, no university can be run except on an elitist basis"; and as long as educators assume that there is no need to maintain a strong division among excellence, competence, inadequacy, and failure, then eventually they will lose their ability to identify that which is excellent and forsake, as well, their concern for it. A factitious attempt to democratize education will defeat its purposes and render it worse than useless. If colleges lower their expectations of students, they sap their educational potential and undermine their academic achievement, since the intellectual development of students depends in great measure on the goals that the institution sets for them.

"How to Kill a College," a recent article in *Saturday Review* by Theodore L. Gross, Dean of Humanities at CCNY, is a tragic recounting of the pitfalls of a misguided concept of democracy which led to lowered academic expectations. It is a case study of a tragic flaw in higher education today. At CCNY the implications of open admissions--deficiencies in basic competencies, lowered expectations, and the demands of special interest groups--were sadly realized and the desire to learn was slowly strangled. The once proud City College of New York, an outstanding college with a long tradition of free education for qualified disadvantaged citizens became, in the words of Dean Gross, "a kind of cheap academic stock market" in which "teachers were stock-



brokers in an inflationary educational economy."

The warnings of President Silber and the experience of CCNY can be salutary for North Adams State College. Santayana observes in The Life of Reason that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This admonition reminds us that a major responsibility of public higher education is to ensure that Jefferson's "natural aristocracy" develop through a sound and challenging education. The reform of the curriculum last year is intended to strengthen basic skills and competencies. The change in general education requirements looks toward a balanced and ordered learning experience which provides a solid basis for major programs. It is our intention to raise standards and expectations, not to lower them. We must continue to demand that our students meet and explore the collective wisdom of mankind in order to provide education in breadth as well as in depth, education that embraces comprehension and discernment as well as information and skills. It is this process that will integrate education and democracy and provide an impetus to lifelong learning and enrichment. As educators with a public charge we should do no less.

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#### CONFESSIONS OF AN EXCITABLE INTERN

by John Williamson

Editor's note: The author spent the 1978 spring semester as a political science intern in North Adams City Hall.

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Many students who contemplate doing an internship hold grandiose expectations that it may be their opportunity to "put it all together": the hours of studying, the countless term papers, the numbing experience of eight o'clock classes, and of course that twilight zone period at the end of each semester, final exam week. Having survived the grueling endurance contest of the educational marathon, the student can presumably apply these

experiences to a real job in an environment not directly related to the classroom. Unfortunately, too many interns discover too late that their levels of crucial decision-making reach their pinnacles when they are faced with the momentous decision of whether the boss would like mustard or mayo on his sandwich. The glorious intern becomes the gofer, the office lackey, the captain of the copy machine.

Fortunately for me, this has not been the case. Don't get me wrong; I haven't taken over City Hall, but I have been graciously taken into it. Maybe the satisfaction of this experience can be attributed to a combination of conditions: good timing; a new mayor; a sense of progress in this city, after years of good intentions that yielded few results; and the confidence and consideration of those with whom I work.

I realize that working in the office of a small-town mayor doesn't carry the initial glamor and prestige of internships such as those in the State House, the U.S. House of Representatives, or the U.S. Senate; but the bottom line of any internship is not where you are, but what you do, what you are directly exposed to, and of course what you learn. I certainly have been learning.

Working with the mayor's HUD Funding Advisory Panel, a group of citizens who oversee the expenditure of various federal grant monies, I have been immersed in grantsmanship, urban planning--both industrial and economic--and housing rehabilitation. I found myself confronted with the jargon of public administration, which at first confused me even more than trying to find meaning in the work of Jackson Pollock. Terms such as CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), SWAG (Statistical Wild Ass Guess), CBD (Central Business District), and UDAG (Urban Development Action Grant) have now become daily shop talk.

My duties are endless, which is a must for a naturally hyperactive person like myself, keeping me constantly challenged, satisfied, and sane. During a typical



day I have a series of briefings with the mayor in which he runs developments by me, asks for and respects my opinions. I may attend meetings for him, since he is extremely busy and hasn't yet acquired the ability to be in more than one place at one time, although heaven knows he has come very close. Sometimes I answer letters for him, investigate situations, conduct general research, and scan the Federal Register so that the office can keep up to date on developments on the federal level which could possibly affect the city. On occasion it is necessary to draft revisions of city ordinances. I then follow their fate closely as they proceed through the channels of city government, from the city solicitor to conferences with those directly affected by the impact of the new ordinances, and eventually to the city council.

I am constantly meeting new people, from high-ranking officials to everyday citizens like me. It is interesting to see the cast of characters who come to the mayor's office with problems to be solved, some of them as common as barking dog complaints, but others as unique and tough as the unexpected difficulties which plague the new refuse shredder at the landfill.

My decision to undertake this internship is the wisest move I have made in my educational career, save of course my decision to be a history major. Suffering with my peers from senioritis, torn between wanting to graduate and not wanting to give up the security blanket of college life, I found this internship to be the perfect vehicle for soothing the agony of withdrawal from formal education.

If there is, as rumor has it, a real world out there, this internship has helped me to understand better how to face it with practical experience and optimism. Mayor Lamb's understanding, guidance, and confidence have been a real inspiration to me. He reinforces my belief that nice guys can make it.

In fact, if I had it to do all over again, I might have voted differently.

## NORTHERN IRELAND: THE VIEW FROM DUBLIN

by Thomas A. Mulkeen

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This is the second and  
concluding part of a series

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The widening gap between the two parts of Ireland has in large measure been due to the momentum of cultural change in the Republic since 1921. The successful nationalist leaders sought to establish an Irish-speaking Catholic Republic. To reshape the destiny of that part of the island under their control, they glamorized the revolution against England. A generation of Irish citizens grew up amid the myths of the 1916 Rising and the "unfinished task" of 1921.

The obsessive concentration on partition as the almost exclusive object of Irish foreign policy helped aggravate the differences between the two parts of the island. While the initial partition derived from long-established cultural and religious differences, the Irish nationalist movement created a new Ireland much more alien to Northern Protestants than the Ireland that existed before partition. What to a majority of the Irish people has become sacred is, to Northern Protestants, an alien and hateful tradition.

At the outbreak of the Ulster violence in 1969, the Republic's Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, asked Britain to request a U.N. peacekeeping force for Northern Ireland. Speaking to the people of the Republic, he commented that Ulster's civil police were "no longer acceptable and British soldiers were unacceptable in the long run." Expressing his party's republicanism he suggested that only reunification would produce a lasting settlement and announced that an Irish army hospital unit was being sent to the border to aid refugees from the conflict. In a speech at Tralee on September 12, 1969, Lynch said, "We are not seeking to overthrow by violence the Stormont Parliament, but rather to win the agreement of a sufficient number of people in the North to an acceptable form of reunification."



## HERACLITEAN

by Art Sullivan

Gulled and hectored on--noise and neon drove  
 Me down, searching hard to find a better ration--  
 And now, upon the favored shore that lines this cove,  
 I sit, a city-man, slowed to veneration.

A sacred presence hovers over shale and shell,  
 As evening's stillness murmurs on the running tide;  
 The sun's descent leaves lavender to dwell  
 Awhile, where once again the night will soon abide.

The waves upon the shore, the wind across the sand;  
 Within, the pulsing heart; without, the blood of sun--  
 Communion rhythms cross and blend, bend and band--  
 And then, a momentary birth of intuition

Candles light upon our origin and fate--  
 Where all is syllable striving to be heard:  
 Moonlight, night-wind and wave, here plait  
 Their consonance--as I, their vowel, await our Word.

In New York Dr. Patrick Hillary, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, argued the government's position before the Security Council. The British, angered by Lynch's statements, retorted that Northern Ireland's affairs were within the domestic jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. The world body listened politely but refused to accept the Ulster conflict as a matter for its concern. Frustrated by the British position at the United Nations and by the deployment of British troops in the North, the Lynch government seemed to be saying that Ireland's claim to justice was again being denied by British armed might.

Dublin's capacity to become involved in Ulster affairs was limited by physical and political constraints. Irish public opinion was aroused, but not to the point of supporting hazardous steps. Nor was the Irish government in any position to force the British to accept its viewpoint.

In these circumstances--trammelled by the lack of a viable policy--Lynch nevertheless continued to search for a role in Ulster. In 1972 both the British and the Irish governments began to reassess their positions. On January 22, 1972, Edward Heath and Jack Lynch signed their two countries into the European Economic Community, joining both England and Ireland to Western Europe. Released by unity with Europe from the strategic preoccupation with the North and repelled by the violence, the British realized that a fresh beginning could be made. The Heath government assumed direct rule in Ulster and began the search for a new format for home rule. At the beginning of 1974 a power-sharing Executive came into effect under the leadership of Brian Faulkner.

With Britain committed to reform in Northern Ireland, the policy of the Dublin



government also changed. The Republic's membership in the European Economic Community had the potential for reducing its dependence on British markets and improving its political posture with London. At the same time, the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin and the escalating I.R.A. killings of noncombatants in Belfast forced the Irish to have second thoughts about incorporating Ulster. Many in the South began to assume the position that the immediate problem was not how to get unity, but how to share the island peacefully. They also acknowledged that conditions precluded reunification as long as Ulster Protestants were unwilling.

From 1972 onward, Jack Lynch and his successor, Liam Cosgrave, began a slow and sometimes halting process of assuring Northern Protestants that the South no longer meant to submerge them in a Catholic community. The Lynch government won a referendum which removed from the Republic's Constitution a clause which "recognized the special position of the Church as guardian of the faith professed by a majority of the citizens of the State." Later, historical revisionists in the coalition government endorsed the political and religious rights of the Ulster loyalists.

In 1976 Conor Cruise O'Brien, the minister for Posts and Telegraphs, in a low-key speech wondered whether the state ought to deny young couples the means of controlling the size of their families and, further, whether the time had come for a national debate on divorce and Church-controlled education. In the discussion that followed, Dr. O'Brien's position was supported by Foreign Minister Garret FitzGerald. In challenging the close relationship between the Catholic Church and the state, government leaders now recognize that among Protestant objections to unity there are some legitimate concerns.

Seeking formulas to reduce the conflict, leaders of both Northern communities met with British and Irish government ministers at Sunningdale in December 1973. In an historic break with tradition the

newly elected Irish coalition government conceded that Ulster's link to the United Kingdom could not be broken without the consent of a majority of the citizens of the North. Britain, in turn, pledged that she would support the unification of Ireland should a majority of Northern citizens wish to end the division of the country. It was also agreed that a pan-Irish Council of Ireland would be established and that effective security procedures aimed at I.R.A. terrorism would be instituted in both parts of Ireland. Dublin was gratified that it was at last recognized as having a legitimate interest in the North.

The statement on majority consent was the first commitment of its kind by an Irish government. In an interview with the writer, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, the foreign minister, commented that Sunningdale represented the first realistic attempt at unification in the sixty years' existence of the Irish state. In effect he was saying that past policy could never lead to reunification and that his government's approach was more sensible. The coalition government felt that formal acceptance of the de facto status of Northern Ireland was required to fulfill the promise of a Council of Ireland and to ensure the effectiveness of the power-sharing Executive in the North.

It was hoped that the Council would facilitate a reduction in North-South alienation through joint attention to Irish administrative and economic problems. Dublin expected the Council to encourage the growth of mutual trust in both parts of the island, and eventually to usher in a united sovereign nation. Many Irish evolutionists expected the Council to build a pluralistic Irish nationalism, valuing equally Protestant settler and native Catholic traditions. In general, the Irish public viewed the agreement as an innovative and welcome step which brought relief and governing opportunities to Northern Catholics.

The Sunningdale agreements proved to be quite fragile. The I.R.A. declared war on the December accords. Militant Protestants, prompted by the fear that



power-sharing was the first step toward an eventual union with the Republic, were openly hostile. In the spring of 1974 a crippling two-week general strike brought the economy of Northern Ireland to a standstill. Determined to render the Council of Ireland proposal unworkable, Protestant extremists took over distribution of the Province's supplies. They ran their own welfare service and operated their own health and gasoline rationing systems.

Impressed by the effectiveness of the strike, the British government displayed a generally passive response to the situation and began to encourage compromise. They assumed that a clear majority of the region's people opposed the Sunningdale reforms. Faced with total economic disruption, the government of Brian Faulkner (the short-lived Executive) resigned. The British government reimposed direct rule on the Province, suspended the power-sharing Executive, and postponed indefinitely the establishment of the proposed Council of Ireland. The Reverend Ian Paisley triumphantly proclaimed Sunningdale's demise. Since 1974 official British policy has been to rule Northern Ireland directly, while waiting for local politicians to agree on a formula for a new Stormont assembly. In truth, the British have capitulated to militant Ulster unionists.

Despite the failure of the Sunningdale agreements the coalition government of Liam Cosgrave continued to stress a pragmatic policy toward Britain and Northern Ireland. Speaking before the United Nations, Dr. FitzGerald stated: "We have expressly proclaimed our rejection of violence in any form. We have accepted the right of the majority within Northern Ireland to determine freely the character of the relationship of Northern Ireland with our state."

It was not the British presence in Northern Ireland but I.R.A. violence that the Dublin government feared. The Dublin Courthouse bombings and the murder of the British Ambassador in the summer of 1976 brought renewed fear in Dublin that the

Ulster violence would spread to the Republic. During the fall of 1976 a series of bills was passed designed to curb the activities of the I.R.A. The Emergency Powers Bill gave the police power to hold suspects up to seven days. In economic terms the anti-I.R.A. campaign added three hundred and fifty million dollars to an already strained annual budget. The increase represented the cost of raising Ireland's peacetime army and of beefing up its police strength.

Behind the coalition's policy was the assumption that the Irish State, because of its separate development without the six counties since 1921, had acquired its own distinctive cultural identity. They believed that the state satisfied its mainly Catholic citizenry, which prefers what it knows to the unknown of a thirty-two-county nation containing a sizeable minority of restless Protestants.

In the general election of 1977, Jack Lynch's Fianna Fail party scored an upset victory over the coalition government of Liam Cosgrave. Economic issues were most responsible for Cosgrave's defeat, but Lynch had taken a more nationalistic position on Northern Ireland. As Taoiseach, Lynch has not renounced the previous government's adherence to the majority consent doctrine. He has, however, tended to work for a British decision to make unification possible and has argued that there can never be permanent peace in Ireland while the British presence remains. The present Irish government realizes that a deadlock exists in Northern Ireland because the British continue to guarantee the position of the Ulster majority. Dublin questions the ability and willingness of the British political parties to apply their minds seriously to any new initiative in Northern Ireland.

Only Britain has the power to settle the Ulster question on Irish nationalist terms. British policy is influenced by the heritage of religious and political expansion into Ireland, by the residues of strategic interest in the smaller island, and by past affirmations to honor the wishes of the community that has served



the Crown. The current British regime gives no indication that it might reassess its historical position.

### TUITION TAX CREDITS

by David W. Kirkpatrick

Tax credit for tuition costs may be a Congressional inevitability unless headed off by an Administration counterproposal. Nearly one hundred tax credit bills have been introduced in the House or Senate this session, and the idea's attractiveness in an election year is obvious.

Which is not to say they are a good idea. They are not.

They simply are not justified by the facts of cost. In the past decade family incomes have risen 10-15% more rapidly than college costs. Middle class families have more disposable income, and college requires a smaller proportion of that income than formerly.

The average family is also smaller than it used to be, thus making the available income per child higher than it was ten years ago.

Nor are tax credits related to need. A flat credit would go to the Rockefellers, Mellons, Pews--not to mention \$60,000-a-year members of Congress--as well as to the family of four with a \$15,000 income.

Since only so much public money is available, every \$500 to a multimillionaire is \$500 that cannot go to someone in need.

Since the poor also pay proportionately more of their incomes in direct and hidden taxes than the average taxpayer, a tax credit would be a form of Robin Hood in reverse, taking from those who can least afford it and giving it to those who least need it. Or, to paraphrase the Bible, we would give to those who have and take from those who have not even that which they have.

Most college students already come from the middle and upper classes, and tuition costs cover only about one-third of the actual cost of their education. The hidden subsidy in college education benefits these classes the most by far. And the greater the cost of the education, the greater this disparity. Medical education, which can cost \$60,000 a year, only a small fraction of which is paid for by tuition, is almost the exclusive province of students from middle class professional families.

There is also some belief that the availability of tax credits would lead to increased college charges of at least an equivalent amount. This would wipe out the effect of the credits and leave as the main result the increased tax rates that would be necessary to make up for the revenue lost because of the credits.

It has been estimated that even the Carter plan to make grants available to those with family incomes of \$25,000 and to raise the limit for loans from \$31,000 to \$45,000 might reduce by 180,000 the students coming from families with incomes less than \$16,000 who would be helped.

What does seem to be true is an increasing unwillingness by parents to help their own sons and daughters obtain an education, as well as the common misconception that, when the government pays, it is "free."

Is it really true that a family with a \$20,000 income and two children cannot afford the average of \$2,800 that it costs for a resident undergraduate at a public institution--where most go? Or even the \$4,568 for costs at a private school? This is still less than the cost of a new car, the annual sales of which approximate the number of college students.

The irony is that if middle class constituents have their political will in this matter, as seems likely, their cost will be higher than their benefit. They will get the credit for the few years their own youngsters are in college, but they will have to pay higher taxes the rest of their lives so that others, including the wealthy, can get the same



benefit. It is not to be expected that such a program, once started, will be brought to an end.

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## The Periodical Press

### CHICKEN

Chicken is far cheaper than beef, lamb, and pork, and most people eat a lot of it nowadays. There are also some environmentally-minded souls who choose chicken because it is less consumptive of food resources: it takes one pound of grain to make one pound of chicken meat, whereas the steer eats eight pounds of grain to make one pound of beef. If you have been favoring chicken for either of these reasons, but your stomach is easily turned, you are advised not to read Cathryn Baskin's expert, passion-filled account of her brief career in the commercial chicken-raising business, "Confessions of a Chicken Farmer" (Country Journal, April). One does not come away from this piece nursing downy visions of fluffy chicks playing about on Easter morn. The picture, instead, is of the great maw of America's hunger gobbling millions of chickens whose accelerated, drug-riddled, brutalized nurture it knows not of.

Having trended into Maine and come upon hard times in search of a living close to the land, Baskin and a friend were attracted to the relative comfort of a heated farmhouse and a \$100-a-week income by an offer to raise chickens on a large scale. Choking down their distaste for agribusiness, they signed a contract and, after a week of readying their 350-foot, three-story chicken house, happily received their first lot of 62,500 baby chicks fresh from the hatchery.

That was the high point of the experience; from there on, it was downhill all the way. Murphy's Law operated frequently. The incinerator blew up, waterers flooded, power went out, furnace failed, water pumps stopped, feed deliveries were bungled, the alarm system malfunctioned. A chicken farmer can lose his flock with apocalyptic suddenness. Take ventilation.

Six-week-old chickens use up all the oxygen in the barn in twenty minutes. In winter it can be a close thing to balance proper ventilation against the high temperature requirement (up to 90 degrees Fahrenheit). If something goes wrong, and the alarm system fails, the farmer is out of business in a hurry.

In seven and a half weeks the chickens grow to four or five pounds and are ready for market. The manner of their leaving is Kafkaesque. Flatbed trucks, with red lights flashing, pull up in the middle of the night; lights are doused and the chickens herded into crates by lurid flashlight; by 3 A.M. the job is finished, leaving the chicken house empty of life but full of filth, both animal and human.

Two noisome rounds later, Baskin and friend--their lungs filled with dust, their nostrils with ammonia, and backs aching from lugging tons of feed (about whose quality and purity they had deep doubts)--opted out, their minds blown. A chicken-farming friend had advised them that a love of chickens was a prerequisite for success in the business. Baskin, after raising 187,500 chickens in eight months, came to the opposite conclusion. You have to hate them, she says.

The Mind's Eye takes special pride in reviewing this excellent piece of writing. Cathryn Baskin is now a member of the North Adams State College community. For the past year she has been a graduate assistant in the English Department, while she completes studies for a M.Ed. in Environmental Education.

### EDUCATIONAL FERMENT AT HARVARD

For the past four years, under the direction of Henry Rosovsky, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, Harvard has been studying its undergraduate program with a view to reforming the General Education component. The progress of the effort, with the opinions of instructors and students, is chronicled in Saturday Review, April 1 ("Confusion at Harvard: What Makes an Educated Man?" by Susan Schiefelbein).



The existing General Education program, devised in sparer form by President James Bryant Conant in 1945, has grown to a choice of an incredible 2,600 courses from which students may fulfill a requirement of completing ten courses distributed evenly among the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The result of this is an educational experience so eclectic that graduates lack the basis for common discourse on the values of civilization. In 1974 Dean Rosovsky, referring to Harvard's commencement greeting ("Welcome to the company of educated men and women"), wrote: "At the moment, to be an educated man or woman doesn't mean anything. It may mean that you've designed your own curriculum; it may mean that you know all about urban this or rural that. But there is no common denominator."

This spring, a proposed common denominator, called "Report on the Core Curriculum," was sent to the faculty for formal debate. In briefest outline, it calls for ten courses, as follows: one in expository writing, one in literature, one in either fine arts or music, two in social and philosophical analysis, one in mathematics, one in science, two in history, and one in foreign language and culture. The outcome of the debate is expected to exert an enormous influence on American college education for the rest of this century.

--Charles A. McIsaac

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#### NEWSWEEK WATCH

by Sarah H. Clarke

The intent of this column is to highlight articles on a variety of subjects abstracted weekly from Newsweek. It is intended to be an aid in researching material too recent to be indexed in Reader's Guide. The complete version--on reserve in the library--is arranged in subject divisions. Since the Mind's Eye carries a column of periodical press reviews, it seems appropriate to include a section from a weekly publication. Your comments are welcome.

"Israel Strikes Back." March 27, pp. 26-32. In a detailed analysis of the Israeli strike at Palestinian strongholds in Lebanon, Newsweek's cover story examines the dire diplomatic implications.

"When Priests Resign." April 10. pp. 96-100. The conservative Vatican position on priests' resignations is questioned by many Catholic scholars who are tending to accept the idea of a married clergy.

"Furor over the Neutron Bomb." April 17, pp. 34-45. The most serious criticism to date of Jimmy Carter's foreign policy leadership has arisen over his ambiguous stand on the controversial neutron bomb.

"Living with Dying." May 1, pp. 52-61. A new awareness is transforming the face of death from a remote and frightening subject to an accepted fact of life.

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#### Contributors

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Art Sullivan, Professor of Philosophy, has special interests in Santayana and, obviously, the seminal thought of Heraclitus.

John Williamson, a member of the class of 1978, has lived in California, Maryland, and Cape Cod. Commencement, which he approaches with mixed feelings, will be followed by a trip to Europe.